

CRISIS IN ITALY

Premier de Gasperi handed in the resignation of his Cabinet on Tuesday, May 13, shortly before he was to appear before the Assembly to urge a broadening of the Italian Government. This step was necessary, de Gasperi said, because of the statement issued by the Socialists on May 12 expressing reservations to the policy he outlined to the Italian Cabinet earlier in the day.

The Socialist statement, as reported by Radio Rome, declares that the Socialist Party Executive and Parliamentary group heard a report by the Socialist Ministers on their "reservations" at Monday's Cabinet meeting to the "political crisis virtually opened by the Premier," who is accused of "an attempt to shift the political equilibrium of the Government, thus increasing its inefficiency at a moment when the economic and monetary situation of the country imposes the implementation of the program agreed upon." The statement concludes by asserting that the Executive and the Parliamentary group entirely agreed with the reservations. (Italian Rome Service, May 13, 1947)

At 12:45 p.m. Tuesday (Italian time) de Gasperi told the Cabinet that after the Socialist statement "he can no longer carry out the mandate of the Cabinet to address the Constituent Assembly" and he would resign, thus climaxing weeks of negotiations with Center and Right groups about the possibility of participating in a broadened Cabinet which would represent a Government of national unity. (Rome, ANSA, May 13, 1947)

At the Cabinet meeting at which he announced his resignation, de Gasperi is reported also to have referred to an editorial in Tuesday's edition of the Socialist organ AVANTI to the effect that a broadening of the Government, as de Gasperi understood it, "would mean the paralysis of the Government, and the doom of parliamentarianism." As a result, de Gasperi felt that "the interest of clarification and the spirit of collaboration" would be better served by the Cabinet's resignation "thus opening the way to consultation of all the parliamentary groups." After Socialist Ministers Romita and Giocatore denied that their Party was responsible for the crisis, de Gasperi cited the article in Tuesday's Communist paper, UNITA, which said that the Premier's scheduled statement to the Assembly would be "personal, and not in his capacity as Premier." (Rome, ANSA, May 13, 1947)

In a statement to the journalists Cacciatore declared that de Gasperi "attempted to throw responsibility for the crisis on our Party," a responsibility that the Socialists would not accept, since they had already voiced their reservations to broadening this Government when de Gasperi first broached the subject in his last broadcast. Communist Minister Scruvi tells the press that the Communists members of the Cabinet have informed the Premier that "on principle they thought that de Gasperi could still make his report to the Assembly." When interviewed by corra-

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spondents after handing in the Cabinet's resignation, de Gasperi contended that the Cabinet had authorized him to support in a speech before the General Assembly a report by Caspili and Morandi "of a general nature, analyzing the country's economic situation and appealing "for a wide basis with the collaboration of those forces which I deemed necessary to overcome the serious but not insurmountable situations. There were reservations, but not of a character to affect my mandate."

When asked whether Italy would follow France's example and exclude the Communists, de Gasperi said that "he had no forecasts to make but this had not been his intention." (Rome, ANSA, May 13, 1947)

At this point it might be useful to recall that the present strength of the Communists and their close allies, the Hanni Socialists, in the Italian Constituent Assembly while not a majority is such as to make any Government formed with the two parties in opposition rather unstable. On the other hand, the leftists alone would not have a majority in the Assembly. It should also be noted that in the recent French crisis, which was provoked by the Communists, the Socialists broke their alliance with the Reds, a development which could not reasonably be expected in the Italian situation, especially since it is the left Socialists themselves who are being accused of starting the crisis. At any rate, the present Government which consists of a coalition of the two leftist parties together with the moderate Christian Democrats, could not continue for long while the leftist parties opposed the inclusion of the right in the Government and de Gasperi's Christian Democrats insisted on broadening the Government.

In the end, either one of the two groups must adopt the viewpoint of the other and reform the Government with its present composition, or a government of moderates or administrators may be formed excluding both right and left elements which would, nevertheless, enjoy leftist support in the Assembly.

The thinking of the left Socialist leader Nenni (a minority of the Socialists under the leadership of Saragat is anti-Communist) is indicated by an interview he granted to a correspondent of the Regione GAZZETINO DEL LAVORO. Nenni charges that the crisis is "an attempt of the right to postpone the solution of many problems," and he says that "the elections already arranged for October ought to take place."

Turning to the international scene, Nenni does not believe that war between the United States and the Soviet Union is possible and he compares the present disagreement with the differences between England and France that arose after the first World War. But he adds: "Should this conflict materialize, we Socialists would say that it ought not to interest us. The blood of Italian youth ought not to be shed on the battle fields. Through our culture and habits are of a western character, our sympathies go out to the West, and not only to Russia but also to Poland and the other states of the East." (Rome, ANSA, May 12, 1947)

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estimates show a deficit of 312 billion lire which could be covered by the internal credit market, provided that there were confidence in Italy's economic revival, which "timorous people and speculators are trying to undermine." Italy thus far has been able "to keep above water" de Gasperi says, thanks to UNRRA aid, the United States repayment of occupation costs, and the international food fund, but the end of Italy's "assisted economy" is approaching and the country can obtain loans and investment from abroad only if she has a reconstruction plan which gives "security to foreign investors."

De Gasperi concludes with an appeal for Italian unity and urges the promotion of emigration and tourism, and the reorganization of the Italian merchant fleet. (Italian Home Service, May 13, 1947)

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The Tugoslav News Agency quotes Nenni as saying in a speech at Milan that "it should be clear to every progressive person in America that the Italians cannot pay for bread and coal with national and political slavery." Speaking on domestic affairs, Nenni stressed that the "speedy and firm carrying out of the land reform and the nationalization of large industrial enterprises" are necessary and would be the main points in the Socialist election platform in the October elections. (Belgrade, TANYUG, May 12, 1947)

After the Government's resignation, the Socialist Parliamentary group, with Nenni in the chair, decided to issue a public statement which declared that the crisis "was started by Premier de Gasperi with his broadcast of April 28 which was based on a complete lack of confidence in the foundation on which the third de Gasperi Government had been set up in its majority and its program." The Socialists claim that their attitude was made known to de Gasperi in good time and he was called upon to implement the Government's program and "impose discipline on everybody, especially the privileged classes whose desertion before the sacrifices necessary for the country's reconstruction was one of the main causes of the present chaos." In forming a new Government the Socialists call for the respect of the "democratic will of the people, as expressed on June 2. (Rome, ANSA, May 12, 1947)

The Communist Parliamentary group in its public statement accuses de Gasperi of helping "to increase political uncertainty and confusion by opening a Government crisis in a nonconstitutional and politically dangerous and inconvenient manner." The statement adds that "whatever the breadth which the people can or want to give to a new Government, the latter should correspond to the democratic structure of the Government expressed by the electoral consultations from June 2 onward."

Former Premier Bonomi in a statement to journalists said of the possibility of his joining a "Government of National unity" that "I myself and Orlando and Ritti—who are as independent as I—might join it." Meanwhile, non-Government parties are also expressing their opinions. The parliamentary group of the PSDI—the Saragat Socialists—declares that the Cabinet's resignation is "a threat before the responsibilities which it had to shoulder before the Constituent Assembly" and the "real situation in the country should be publicly known before other parties assume Governmental responsibilities."

A 10-point statement by the Republican Party's Executive declares that the present economic situation can only be overcome by a Government "able to gain the confidence and respect of public opinion" and which would include in it elements of "political leadership and technical experience." Such a Government would be able to overcome "the game of the vested interests, small and great egoisms, and any Party, class, or group maneuvers." (Italian Home Service, May 13, 1947)

De Gasperi winds up the events of May 12 with a speech over the Italian network in which he avoids all mention of the Government's resignation and confines himself to a description of Italy's economic situation which he says he would have given to the Constituent Assembly "had the rules Allowed." De Gasperi reveals that the 1947-1948 Italian budget

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